

# St. John's Ukrainian Orthodox Choir

presents the first in a series of

## CHORAL CONCERTS

Masonic Temple  
Edmonton

Thursday November 24<sup>th</sup> 1949

George Bilashevich  
CONDUCTOR



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## UKRAINIAN SONG

"History has been cruel to the Ukrainians, crushing out their liberties and glories," wrote the eminent Canadian scholar and poet, Prof. Waiken KirkConnell, "but the pent-up emotions of a thousand years, the passion of freedom, the poignancy of broken hearts, the tears of joy at the beauty of spring and love and the nightingale's voice—these have gushed forth in songs that are worthy of living forever."

In Ukrainian song can be found a happy spirit and optimism thoroughly saturated with love of freedom. The Ukrainian songs developed under the influence of powerful political events—wars with the Tartars, Turks, Russians and Poles— and drew its strength from the ancient folk-songs, ballads and dances.

It is in a-cappella singing that the Ukraine has been most noted since the 16th century. The fact that compositions of that time were for four to twenty-four voices, testifies to the high development of this art.

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### THE CHOIR MASTER

Mr. George Bilashewich was born in Western Ukraine, the son of a clergyman. Very early in his life, his family moved to a district on the outskirts of Kiev, where he received his early schooling. After completing a course in choral conducting at the Kiev Conservatory, Mr. Bilashewich soon became one of the few choir masters of Opera Kiev. During the Second World War, he was conscripted by the Germans to work as a slave-laborer in Germany until he was liberated by the allied armies at the conclusion of hostilities. In the Displaced Persons camps he organized and led many choirs of which the most famous was the Ukrainian Male Chorus "TREMBETA". Upon the advice of the Ukrainian Orthodox Archbishop of Canada, His Grace Metynslav Skrypnyk, the Edmonton parish brought Mr. Bilashewich to this city where he has made his home. He is the permanent choir conductor of the Ukrainian Orthodox Parish of St. John.

## Programme

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST".....STROKIN

"Слава Богу на Небѣ"

The hymn of the angels announcing the birth of Christ.  
It is also the opening hymn in the Orthodox early mass.

"TO THE HOLY VIRGIN".....ARCHANGELSKY

"Дѣ Богородици"

This prayer, honoring the Holy Virgin, asks Her to pray in our behalf to Jesus, Her Son, to forgive our sins.

"HYMN OF THE CHERUBIM" (No. 7) — BORTNIANSKY

"Херувимская" (Ч. 7)

Bortniansky, a Ukrainian who studied in Leningrad, composed many different Hymns of the Cherubim of which his seventh is one of the most famous. This hymn forms part of the Orthodox liturgy.

"THE LORD'S PRAYER".....DAVIDOWSKY

"Отче Наш"

(Soloist: Miss Helen Mysak)

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## Programme

### "ONCE THERE WAS FREEDOM" ..... DEMUTSKY

"Тоді Кошові Били Поемні, Боги"

Typical of many cossack songs are the clurs and open vowels with which it is sung. This is a reminiscent song about a cossack who will never return from battle.

### "COSSACK SONG" ..... LYSENKO

"Ой Гає, Мате"

Lysenko, the father of Ukrainian music, arranged this folk song about a young cossack, unafraid of death, who regrets leaving his loved-one behind.

### "A COSSACK'S LAMENT" ..... LUDKEWICH

"Ізак Чепіає"

There is an old Ukrainian custom of giving a young warrior a "kerchief by his loved-one, and in the event of his death, it is to be placed over his eyes. This is a folk song about just such an event.

### "SIGHOVIY STRILTBI" ..... LEONTOVICH

"Тоді Бу Чепіає"

The "Sighoviy Striltbi" were the Ukrainian Army of Liberation in 1919. They won their freedom, but only for a short while, when the Bolshevik armies over-ran their country. This is a gay battle-song in march tempo.

### "THE AWAKENING" ..... NEDILSKY

"Зачекай Конче Зачекай"

A Ukrainian National March, closely resembling the arrangement of a brass band. The theme describes a nation awakening to defend its homeland.

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## Programme

"THE SPINNING SONG" ..... LEONTOVICH  
"Пряжа"

Leontovich was a master of arranging folk songs, carried down through generations. He displays one of his best-liked arrangements in a simple song of a young wife, grudgingly tolerating her in-law, but eagerly waiting for her husband's return from the fields.

"DAUGHTER'S MISFORTUNE" ..... LEONTOVICH  
"Моя Мать Дару Дову"

The Ukrainians have an old tradition, that if they bathe their children in certain herbs, they will grow up lucky and immune to misfortune. This song is about this superstition — a mother had only one daughter and bathed her in herbs. Eventually the girl marries a drunkard, who abuses and beats her; the superstition is discredited.

"THE MINSTREL SONG" ..... LEONTOVICH  
"Дуларик"

This folk song is about an old minstrel, who used to play a lute, keeping his whole village amused with his music. When he died, all was gone, but the lute. No one could play it because no one took the trouble to learn the art from the old minstrel.

"WHEN I GROW UP" ..... KOZITSKY  
"Ой, Діє, Діє"

A comic love song.

"MONDAY MORN" ..... LEONTOVICH  
"Ой Утрам Я в Понеділок"

This central folk song is about a young widow, who does nothing all week except have a gay time with her friends in the pub — waiting only for Sunday, when she can get her weekly rest.

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